

The Country Homemakers

CONDUCTED BY MARY P. McCALLUM

HAVE WOMEN FEDERAL VOTE?

In a communication from Mrs. McNaughtan, president of the Saskatchewan W.S.G.G.A. printed on the farm woman's club page she asks that I give you the latest information on the question as to whether women shall vote at the coming federal election or whether they shall not. I am writing this several days before it can reach you, and since in these days of change and unsettling almost anything is likely to happen in the interval I shall try to give you the latest developments on some other page.

From the time the women of Ontario, Manitoba and British Columbia received the provincial franchise they have claimed that by receiving the provincial franchise they were automatically given the federal franchise also. Unfortunately as the act today stands there is not the slightest hope by which the women of Saskatchewan and Alberta can claim the federal franchise. When these two provinces were incorporated in the Dominion in 1905 new provisions applying to only these two provinces and to the Yukon territory were inserted in the act and in those provisions the qualifications for an elector in the federal elections plainly state that the elector must be a "male person." The qualifications for voters in the federal elections in the other provinces of the Dominion merely state that such person as is qualified to vote in the provincial elections is qualified to vote in the federal elections. The women in the older provinces claim that the word "person" while never having been construed to include women does not mean that women are excluded and that they therefore are entitled to Dominion franchise.

What Members Say

The provincially enfranchised women of the older provinces were blissfully ignorant of any serious doubt in the minds of the "powers that be" as to whether they really were "persons" or not until about the middle of May. On May 17, parliament spent nearly the whole day discussing votes for women. The opinions of prominent members of parliament on the word "person" and indeed on the whole matter of women suffrage for federal elections were astonishing. Many of the members of parliament, however, believed that the Dominion franchise should be extended to women of all provinces, among this number being, Sir Robert Borden, Mr. Donald Sutherland of South Oxford, Mr. W. A. Buchanan of Medicine Hat, Mr. W. Wright of Muskoka and Dr. Michael Clark of Red Deer. Others believed that the extending of the Dominion franchise to women should be a local affair, that is, that where the province grants the franchise to women those women should also be permitted to vote in general elections. The supporters of this view included Sir Wilfrid Laurier and Hon. William Pugsley. Hon. C. J. Doherty disagreed with both factions and urged that the word "person" had always meant "male person" and that legislation would have to be passed before women could vote in general elections in any of the provinces.

Not long after this the Senate gave as its opinion of the matter that the word "person" had always implied "male person" and could not now be understood to include other than "male person." It further contended that the only way to give women the Dominion franchise was to introduce and pass a new franchise bill or so amend the old one as to plainly include women. That settled the question of whether the women of the older provinces who had the provincial franchise had the Dominion franchise also.

The New Bill

On September 6, Hon. Arthur Meighen introduced a new franchise bill in the House of Commons which so far as I can learn has left the women of Canada dumb with astonishment. That bill provides for the enfranchising of the wife or widow, mother, sisters and daughters of the soldiers who have gone overseas. On Saturday night, September 8, the bill came up for its second reading. At 11:50 o'clock on that night Hon. George Foster who was leading the government in the absence of Sir Robert Borden gave notice that closure would apply when the bill again came up for consideration. That is the information up-to-date regarding the question of whether or not we women are going to be permitted to vote in the coming elections. In the subsequent issues of The Guide I shall try to keep you informed on the progress of that bill. I would advise you to write to the Bureau of Publications at the government offices at Ottawa for a copy of the bill and for copies of Hansard (the verbatim debates of the House of Commons) beginning September 6 and subsequent to that date so that you will know exactly where the members of parliament stand in regard to this bill upon which I shall comment in another column.

MARY P. McCALLUM.

In order to manage children well, we must borrow their eyes and their hearts, see and feel as they do, and judge them from their own point of view.—Eugenia De Guerin.

EXECUTIVE MEETING S.P.E.F.B.

On September 4, three long and busy sessions of the executive of the Saskatchewan Provincial Equal Franchise League, were held in the Y.W.C.A., Regina, to discuss many important questions of the day. Those present were Mrs. Lawton of Yorkton, president; Miss Ida Sifton, Moose Jaw, 1st vice-president; Mrs. E. R. Myers, Saskatoon, 2nd vice-president; Mrs. H. V. Haight, Keeler, 3rd vice-president; Mrs. Robt. Sinton, Regina, 4th vice-president; Mrs. H. K. Meisenheimer, Strongfield, secretary; Mrs. Barrett Scott, Moose Jaw; Mrs. G. E. Ellis, Prince Albert; Mrs. W. W. Andrews and Mrs. E. W. Stapleford, Regina.

Many resolutions on the weighty questions of the day were drafted and those concerning or lying within the scope of the Dominion government were telegraphed there. Besides the resolutions I shall quote, were those dealing with the election of the members of the police commission, asking for a higher class of motion picture films, and regarding the alleged misplacement of the patriotic funds.

Re Liquor Manufacture

A resolution regarding the manufacture, importation, exportation and sale of intoxicants for beverages to ensure that there will be no retrograde movement at the close of the war, will be referred to the British-Dominion women's suffrage union which holds its annual union in London in June, 1918, and from which an invitation has come for a delegate to be sent from the Saskatchewan board.

Urges National Government

After a certain amount of discussion as to the getting together of a truly representative national government, it was resolved that telegrams be sent to Premier Borden and to Sir Wilfrid Laurier urging that all efforts possible be put forth immediately to organize a representative national government.

Further resolutions concerning the action of the Dominion were:

(1) That the Federal government should be asked by the board to grant the Federal franchise to the women of Canada.

(2) That, in view of the fact that in the womanhood of the country there is a great force which might be utilized if organized for national service, be it resolved that, together with the conscription of men, national resources, and wealth, the woman power of the country also be definitely organized.

(3) Resolved that a resolution be sent from the Provincial Equal Franchise Board of Saskatchewan to the Dominion government, asking that military pensions be equalized as between officer and private.

(4) Resolved that the Provincial Equal Franchise Board memorialize the Dominion government that all soldiers who have served at the front two years be given leave of absence for a reasonable furlough.

(5) Resolved that the Provincial Equal Franchise Board memorialize the Dominion government that the rates of pay given to Canadian privates and their allowance be raised so that there will be no necessity for a patriotic fund.

Extend Organization

At the annual meeting held in Moose Jaw in April it was decided to divide the province into districts, each to have its own officers for the purpose of extending organization. Mrs. E. R. Meyers of Saskatoon and Mrs. Violet McNaughtan of Piche were appointed to the committee to consider the matter. This movement is hampered at the present by lack of funds. It was suggested that where the W.C.T.U. has a strong franchise committee, they will be urged to lend all the assistance they can.

It was decided to prepare literature to be sent to the women of the province before the Dominion and municipal elections, giving information of a practical sort.

Much discussion about the naturalization of women ended in a recommendation being made to the board from the executive that a woman shall be given the same choice of nation as her husband.

WHY NOT IN CANADA ALSO?

At midnight on September 8, all manufacture of whiskey ceased throughout the United States as a result of the terms of the new Food Act. Experts claim that 40,000,000 bushels of grain are consumed annually in the manufacture of whiskey in the United States. The manufacture of alcohol for industrial purposes will continue as before which will really throw very few men out of work. The grain now released for food by the new Food

Act will add materially to the supply for export to Europe from Canada and the United States and makes the estimated shortage of 160,000,000 bushels look less formidable and impossible of making up. Canadians must ask themselves, why can Canada not make the same provision?—M.P. McC.

THE NEW FRANCHISE BILL

This page seems to be suffering from a surfeit of political topics this week but I want to say a word on the Franchise Bill and next week will try to conform to the subjects men say belong to women's domain. To me, the bill is just one more evidence of the hold partyism has on our politicians. It appears that the government has kept this last card to gain re-election for itself up its sleeve until all probabilities that the more popular national government might be formed, were frustrated. The government was not so much afraid of a solid opposition from Quebec under Sir Wilfrid Laurier and Henri Bourassa if it could appeal to the rest of Canada with a strong national government. But when it finds that the chances for that wane dimmer it must gain re-election some other way and proposes to disfranchise those who the government thinks might be opposed to its re-election and to confer the privilege of franchise on those women who the government believes will support it. It was introduced just exactly one month from the day the present parliament must prorogue, and from the introduction of the bill all were sure that closure would be applied. That closure would be applied was announced by Hon. George Foster on Saturday night when the bill came up for its second reading. It is evident that every effort is being made by the government to push the bill through in as short a time as possible.

In his speech at introducing the bill Hon. Arthur Meighen tried to make clear that the bill was designed to make "war service the basis of war franchise." In the first place the franchise can never be considered as a reward for service rendered. The franchise is and always shall be a sacred right, and one with which no government may tamper. But considering it as Mr. Meighen would have us consider it, is war service the basis on which that bill is designed? It provides that the franchise shall be extended to the widows or wives, to the mothers, daughters and sisters of men overseas. There isn't a clause to say that the franchise may be given as a reward to the thousands of women who have spent all their time in working for the Red Cross, for the Field Comforts Commission, for the dependants of the soldiers who are left at home on insufficient allowances and pensions, in making munitions, in taking men's places in the stores and offices to release men for military duty, and for those who are rendering war service in the hundreds of ways with which we are all familiar. However the wives and mothers and the several sisters and daughters of the many "patronage" officers who are in England and who have not the remotest intention of risking their lives in France and Flanders, all receive the franchise for "war service rendered." To say the least it appears a very inconsistent bill so far as rewarding war service goes. If the government had wished to reward those who have sent their relatives to the front in a fair way to everyone concerned why did it not increase the pensions and allowances to an adequate amount and either give women the franchise on the same basis as men or keep all women from exercising the franchise? I do object to classing the thousands of patriotic women who have sent no relatives to the front with the aliens and the "conscientious objectors." It isn't British fair play.

MARY P. McCALLUM.

TEACHING THE VALUE OF MONEY

A certain young mother, who was farsighted enough to see the results of different methods of training, decided that as soon as her small girl was old enough to want spending money, she would allow her a certain amount each week, no more and no less. Being of the feminine persuasion, it did not take the young lady long to discover that money bought gum and candy, and forthwith she proceeded to demand money for the same. This was at the mature age of three, and right there the money question was settled for the year. The little girl was to receive three cents a week, all her own, to do with as she pleased.

At first she flew to the store, and stocked up on all-day suckers and white gum, had a gala day, and then starved for candy the rest of the week. This was the first step in her financial training. She discovered just exactly how much three cents would buy. The second step came when, at the suggestion of her mother, she spent only two cents the first day, and kept one cent for later in the week. It finally worked around until she spent one cent at a time, thus placing the most solid stone on the road to economy, in the knowledge of having the required amount of money in her purse, but passing by the things she really desired, without buying them.